

REMARKS

Claims 19-32 are currently pending in the application, claims 1-18 have been canceled by a previously-filed amendment.

The claimed invention is directed to an online shopping method and system that provides improved anonymity for a customer. The online shopping method as recited in claim 19 involves an anonymous service provider which handles and delivers packages to a customer, a shop receives an order from the customer over a network and transfers ordered goods to the anonymous service provider for delivery to the customer, and an electronic money accounting organization engages in monetary transactions with the shop and issues electronic money the customer uses when purchasing goods from the shop

To transfer an article to the anonymous service provider, the shop attaches to the article a first slip 100 (Figure 3) on which an anonymous code is printed, and then delivers the article to the anonymous service provider. The anonymous service provider then replaces the first slip on the article with a second slip 200 (Figure 4) on which the personal information for the customer is printed, and delivers the article to the customer. Since the first slip is replaced by the anonymous service provider, the shop can not acquire any personal customer information, and the anonymity of the customer can be maintained. Thus, this system is easily implemented simply by replacing the slips.

The anonymous service provider has a server which maintains a database for storing anonymous IDs which can be accessed to correlate with delivery address information for a customer. This server comprises code generation means for generating anonymous IDs.

Claims 19-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,529,885 to Johnson in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,006,200 to Boies et al. Applicant respectfully traverses on the basis that, assuming *arguendo* a combination of Johnson with Boies et al. could be accomplished, such combination would not result in an online shopping method or system, such as the claimed invention, which provides

improved anonymity for a customer.

Johnson is principally concerned with security rather than anonymity. Johnson discloses methods and systems for securely carrying out electronic transactions including electronic drafts, wherein payment on at least one of the drafts is contingent upon the removal of an associated contingency. The method includes establishing a secure computer site accessible only by authenticated parties to the transaction and by any authenticated contingency approver. The Johnson electronic transactions method and system does not contemplate an electronic money accounting organization that engages in monetary transactions and issues electronic money the customer uses when purchasing goods. In other words, while Johnson uses encrypting methods in communications between entities, there is no effort to maintain a customer's anonymity from the shop.

The Examiner has recognized that the claimed invention contains features not present in Johnson, relying on Boies et al. to provide the missing features. Boies et al. disclose a system in which transactions are conducted on the Internet, by telephone or directly with anonymity and privacy. The degree of anonymity provided by Boies et al., however, is significantly lower than the degree of anonymity provided by the claimed invention.

According to Boies et al., a customer's shipping address is encoded by a multi-digit identifier which is stored in the database of a trusted third party, preferably the shipping company. Users of the system identify themselves to a vendor by this multi-digit identifier, which is printed in machine readable form on a package delivered to the shipper, which converts the machine readable identifier into conventional address format for delivery. The shipper has an agreement with vendors to use the same identifier with all shipping requests. In other words, Boies et al. provide that a single identifier is to be used, not only when placing an order but also to provide the customer's shipping address, albeit in encoded form.

Claim 19, by contrast, recites "providing by the anonymous service provider to the customer an anonymous ID upon request of a registered customer and temporarily

maintains the anonymous ID in an anonymous ID database for a *predetermined limited period of time*, the anonymous ID database being accessed by the anonymous service provider to validate an anonymous ID and to *correlate the anonymous ID with delivery information for the customer*” (emphasis added). A similar limitation is recited in claim 26. Claim 20 recites that “a random sequence of alphanumeric characters is used for the anonymous ID.” This random sequence bears no information of the customer’s address, even in encoded form. A similar limitation is recited in claim 27.

The Examiner asserted that Johnson discloses “the anonymous service provided arranging for delivery of the ordered items.” The disclosure of Johnson, however, suggests that a bank could arrange for shipment or delivery of goods in order to preserve buyer anonymity from the seller, without any discussion of whether the bank would do so in a manner that prevents the shipping company (as opposed to the seller) from having access to information identifying the buyer. (Johnson, col. 23, lines 32-36) In this regard, the disclosure of Johnson suggests measures which provide a lower degree of anonymity than does Boies et al. The Examiner expressly recognized that “Johnson does not disclose maintaining the anonymous ID for only a predetermined period of time” and effectively conceded that there is nothing in Boies et al. to provide the features missing from Johnson. The Examiner thereupon asserts without reference:

Merely calling for a password or a user access ID to expire after a certain period of time involved only a notorious expedient of the art that is commonly done to increase security in computer networks.

Applicant respectfully traverses on the basis that the Examiner’s comments in this regard constitute impermissible hindsight as well as an improper assertion of technical fact in an area of esoteric technology without support by citation of any reference work. See MPEP 2144.03 (citing *In re Ahlert*, 424 F.2d 1088, 1091, 165 USPQ 418, 422-21 (CCPA 1970)). Further traversals are as follows:

Examiner's Statement	Traversal
"Johnson discloses a method and system for carrying out electronic transactions including opening by the shop a network homepage when the seller sets up an online web site, see col. 10, lines 38-49."	The referenced passage from Johnson concerns access by users to facilities to pay for goods through electronic banking transactions and does not describe the shipment or delivery of goods, as does the claimed invention.
"Johnson discloses registering by the customer with an anonymous service provider in col. 9, lines 5-50, providing an anonymous service provider in col. 9, lines 33 and 34, ordering over the network using the ID and designating payment in col. 12, line 27 to col. 13, line 60, requesting confirmation that the ID is valid in col. 12, line 46 to col. 13, line 24"	The referenced passages from Johnson concern authentication and password protection and schemes in Internet transactions, which are security features rather than privacy or anonymity features as the Examiner asserts.

<p>“Boies et al. disclose a method and system for conducting transactions on the Internet employing a third party 14 to facilitate the delivery of a package from a vendor 12 to a customer 16 while maintaining the identi[t]y of the customer anonymous from the vendor. The third party supplies a unique identifier to the customer, the customer uses the unique identifier when conducting business with the vendor, the vendor uses the unique identifier to print a machine readable representation of the address code on the package and sends the package to the shipper, the shipper uses the machine readable code to access a master file 208 to retrieve the customer’s shipping address for delivery of the package to the customer, see col. 2, lines 11-64. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the showing and teaching of Boies et al. to provide the system of Johnson with means to have the vendor put a coded label on the order before it is sent to the anonymous service provider and then have the anonymous service provider place a slip on the order with the name and address of the buyer in order to keep the buyer anonymous to the seller.”</p>	<p>The referenced passage from the disclosure of Boies et al. does not address a principle feature of the claimed invention; that is, the claimed invention does not use a single identifier for the purpose of placing an order and for the purpose of providing the customer’s shipping address to the shipper, and does not allow an identifier to persist beyond a predetermined limited period of time. Thus, even if Johnson and Boies et al. could be combined, which Applicant does not concede, the combination would not result in the claimed invention.</p>
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Boies et al. do not make up for the deficiencies of Johnson. The combination of Johnson with Boies et al. would not result in the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 19 to 34 be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or

personal interview.

A provisional petition is hereby made for any extension of time necessary for the continued pendency during the life of this application. Please charge any fees for such provisional petition and any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0510.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Lamont Whitham", is written over a horizontal line.

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